

Shady Grove plan to move forward

■ Council gives final OK to map amendment

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The Montgomery County Council, meeting as the District Council, approved by a 7-1 vote the Shady Grove Sectional Map Amendment, which will allow for the Shady Grove Sector Implementation Plan to move ahead as planned.

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Councilman Philip M. Andrews (D-Dist. 3) of Gaithersburg, whose district includes the Shady Grove area, was the only council member to vote against the sectional map amendment.

The County Council originally approved the Shady Grove Sector Plan on Jan. 17.

"They just approved the final zoning steps," Karen Kumm, county Park and Planning's lead official on the plan, said of Tuesday's action.

She said the area in the plan had already been zoned for industrial

use, but now the majority of the 2,000-acre property is rezoned for residential mixed-use development.

By approving the section map amendment, Kumm said the council also showed that it was in support of the two proposed zoning text amendments, which create a Transfer Development Rights receiving area in Shady Grove. She said in a project such as this, it was necessary to create new zones.

"The reason we created a new zone here was to create a mixed-use residential community, a new walkable community at the Metro station outside of the central business district," Kumm said.

At the Tuesday morning meeting,

the council also touched on suggestions made by its Planned Housing and Economic Development Committee last Monday. One of the suggestions was using the Technical Work Group, one of the committees that will be created by the implementation plan, to determine what stages of the plan have been met.

In order to maintain clarity, the council also reiterated the PHED Committee's recommendation that the Advisory Committee, another group that will be created by the plan, be used in such a way that residents and businesses are kept informed of development and planning issues in Shady Grove.

"We have a rigorous schedule

ahead of us," Councilwoman Marilyn J. Praisner (D-Dist. 4) of Calverton said.

"We're nine months past the master plan and we're still doing the rezoning here today," she added.

The council also spoke about the elementary school site that is included in the implementation plan.

"The county school board needs to recommend acquisition of the Casey at Mill Creek property," Kumm said, adding that deadline is coming up in December.

The need to move the County Service Park was also discussed during the meeting. According to the sector plan, the county has two years from the Jan. 17 adoption date to

move the service park from its site along Crabbs Branch Way at Shady Grove Road. Kumm said if the park is moved by the two-year deadline, it would allow for more housing to be built. If not, she said, less housing would be included in the area.

George L. Leventhal (D-At large) of Takoma Park, president of the County Council, said it would not be an easy property to move.

"As council member [Nancy M.] Floreen said, we can't just plunk it down somewhere," he said.

The implementation plan, a 51-page document, was unanimously approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on Sept. 14. It outlines and identifies the steps needed to relocate the County Service Park and expresses the need to bring together county and state agencies, make a request for bids and form a citizen's group to provide oversight and input.

The next step, Kumm said, is putting the implementation plan into action.

"It's going to be very challenging," she said. "It requires the Montgomery County school board to use advanced acquisition funding to acquire the school site for this plan. This is an action that the County Council will undoubtedly support."

"The second step is that the county executive will have to seek out parties who are interested in relocating the County Service Park by releasing an REOI [Request for Expressions of Interest]. The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission will continue to work with all agencies and property owners to identify sites for the relocation of the County Service Park."